

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
VA Puget Sound Health Care System

Live Whole Health

Official news from VA Puget Sound Health Care System

Must file travel claims within 30 days

When the national emergency related to COVID ended, it brought back the 30-day requirement to file travel claims which had been on hiatus since the pandemic. To get started on your claim, visit access.va.gov and select the Veteran Travel Claim Entry icon. From there, you'll be able log on using a DS-Logon Level 2 account, with a VA PIV card, with ID.me or with your My HealthVet credentials. While you can still file a VA Form 10-3542 and drop it off at one of our main campuses, filing online (www.va.gov/health-care/get-reimbursed-for-travel-pay/) is encouraged as it is the fastest way to be reimbursed. When a paper claim is filed, the Beneficiary Travel Team must manually load and process that claim for the Veteran. This takes significantly longer, leading to substantial backlogs, increasing the wait time to be paid for all Veterans filing this way.

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Observances

October

- 9/15-15-10/15: National Hispanic Heritage Month
- 7: National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
- 13: U.S. Navy Birthday
- National Disability Employment Awareness Month
- Domestic Violence Awareness Month
- National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

November

- 1: Veterans Day
- 10: U.S. Marine Corps Birthday
- National American Indian Heritage Month
- Veteran & Military Family Appreciation Month
- National Family Caregiver Month
- National Diabetes Month

December

- 1: U.S. Civil Air Patrol Birthday
- 13: U.S. National Guard Birthday

VA Puget Sound Health Care System
Free flu shots coming to a VA near you in October!

VA Community Outpatient Clinics
Call clinic location for flu shot dates and hours of operation.

Community Care Flu Shot Options
Eligible Veterans can receive a free flu shot from one of our community partners. Visit va.gov/communitycare/flushot.asp for an in-network location.

VA Main Campus
American Lake (drive-thru) & Seattle (walk-in, Building 101)
October 2 – 28, Monday-Saturday, 8 a.m.- 4 p.m.
(excluding October 9 federal holiday)
Flu shots will also be available during scheduled primary and specialty care appointments.

Questions about flu and COVID-19 vaccines? Call Vaccine Hotline, 1-800-329-8387, ext. 64040

Join VA Puget Sound's Chess Club

Veterans can join other Veterans in learning and playing one of the oldest and most popular board games in the world! And we provide all the equipment is provided including clocks. The VA Puget Sound Chess Club meets every Wednesday from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Seattle Campus, Building 101 lobby. Questions? Call Olin Martin at (206) 617-9380 or email him at Olin.Martin@va.gov.

Tech experts ready to help

VA Puget Sound has **Virtual Health Resource Centers** to offer onsite technology experts to support Veterans, family members and caregivers looking to take advantage of virtual care tools. These experts—available by phone, video and in-person—provide guidance, hands-on support, training, help troubleshooting, and other information regarding virtual care tools, such as VA Video Connect, My HealthVet, health apps, and devices such as smartphone and tablets. Physical VHRCs



are currently as our Silverdale (8 a.m. to 4 p.m., 360-307-2679) and Olympia (8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., 253-583-2621) Community Clinics on a walk-in basis, Monday through Friday. No matter where you are, you can call either of those locations for help.

COVID-19 Bivalent boosters still available

COVID-19 Bivalent boosters can be scheduled during regularly scheduled primary and specialty clinic appointments at all care sites.

Did you know?

Since President Biden signed The Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act (PACT Act) into law as a part of his Unity Agenda, VA has delivered more than \$1.85 billion in earned PACT Act benefits to Veterans and survivors. File a new claim online now—www.va.gov/PACT

Self-schedule community care

VA Puget Sound is making it much easier for Veterans to schedule medical appointments with an in-network community provider for Veterans who are eligible for community care. Self-scheduling allows Veterans to contact an in-network community provider to schedule an appointment. The goal is to minimize scheduling delays by empowering Veterans the ability to coordinate their community care appointments.

Scheduled appointments can be viewed at www.myhealth.va.gov. Find in-network community providers using the VA facility locator at www.va.gov/find-locations/.

Pain management and musculoskeletal injuries

Musculoskeletal conditions are the number one reason Veterans seek treatment at VA. These injuries affect the body's movement. This involves muscles, tendons, ligaments, bones, and joints. Conditions and injuries can be caused by an accident (trauma), overuse (wear and tear), repetitive motions, strenuous physical training, and carrying heavy gear. It's important to get help because

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Free hearing aid batteries

You may be eligible to order hearing aid batteries and accessories from us if you meet all of these requirements. **All of these must be true:**

- You're enrolled in VA health care, **and**
- You're registered as a patient at a VA medical center, **and**
- Your VA audiologist has prescribed hearing aids or other hearing assistive device.

If eligible, you can order online, phone or by mail.

Learn more: www.va.gov/health-care/order-hearing-aid-batteries-and-accessories/



VA Puget Sound
Health Care System offers

Easy Access to up to
**12 months of birth
control**

with only one call or video visit
with a pharmacist

Ask your Primary Care team to place a
Contraception on Demand Consult
or call **206.277.5585** for more information

(from page 3)

musculoskeletal injuries may cause long-term impacts like chronic pain if you do not seek treatment.

Chronic pain is pain that lasts longer than three months. Some examples of chronic musculoskeletal pain are back pain, arthritis, fibromyalgia, and joint problems. Chronic pain can impact your mood and make it difficult to work and participate in everyday activities.

Even though some musculoskeletal conditions may lead to chronic pain, treatment can be helpful in reducing pain and improving function and quality of life.

How to update your health benefits information

Use the Health Benefits Update Form (VA Form 10-10EZR) to update your personal, financial, and insurance information after you're enrolled in VA health care. Complete the form (can download from www.va.gov/find-forms/about-form-10-10ezr/) and mail the form and supportive documents to:

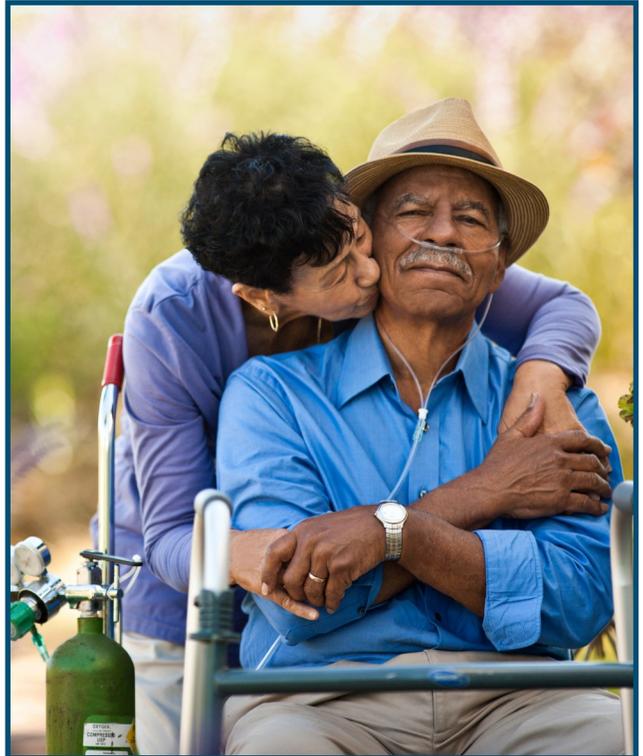
VA Health Eligibility Center
2957 Clairmont Road, Suite 200
Atlanta, GA 30329

Why it's important to keep your address up-to-date

When you change the address and other contact information in your VA.gov profile, it updates across these VA benefits and services:

- VA health care (including prescriptions, appointment reminders, lab and test results, and communications from your VA medical center)

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Have an appointment? Check in with your smartphone

1 Text **check in** to **53079**

OR scan this code with your camera.

To:
53079

Message:
check in



2 Wait until you get a text back with a link. This should only take a few seconds.

3 Tap on the link to start your check-in. Data charges may apply.

Can't scan the QR code? Text us instead ☺

Need to update your information? Check in with a staff member instead ☺

How to file a PACT Act claim

If you haven't filed a claim

- You can file online, by mail, in person, or with the help of a trained professional.
- File a new claim online now – www.va.gov/PACT
- Make an appointment with one of our counselors at www.benefits.va.gov/seattle
- Call Veterans Benefits Administration hotline at 1-800-827-1000 (press 8 for PACT Act)
- Work with a Veterans Service Organization or the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs 206-341-8295.
- Call 1-800-MY-VA-411 to learn more.
- Once you initiated your claim, contact your primary care team to schedule your toxic exposure screening, if not already completed.

If previous disability claim was denied and your condition is now presumptive

- Veterans previously denied a toxic-exposure related claim are encouraged to file a supplemental claim. Once a supplemental claim is received, VA will review the claim under this law.
- Go to www.va.gov/PACT to file.
- Once you initiated your claim, contact your primary care team to schedule your toxic exposure screening, if not already completed.
- Learn more about the PACT Act – and apply – anytime by visiting VA.gov/PACT or calling 1-800-MY-VA-411.



VA Mobile Exposure App

(from page 4)

- Disability compensation
- Pension benefits
- Claims and appeals
- Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E)

You can change your mailing and home addresses in your profile's contact information section. To do this, you need to be signed in to VA.gov with a verified account.

Message from our Executive Director

VA Puget Sound Veterans,

Preventing Veteran suicide is VA's top clinical priority. This effort is a key part of VA's 10-year National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide.

The VA's 2022 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report showed that Veteran suicides decreased in 2020 for the second year in a row, and that fewer Veterans died by suicide in 2020 than in any year since 2006.

While a hopeful trend, that same report showed the suicide rate among Veterans was 57% higher than the general population.

Stressful life events like divorce, job loss, substance use, or housing troubles can be risk factors for suicide. Among Veterans, these challenges can be compounded by stigma around sharing their problems with others and seeking help.

Our message is one of hope. We want to help struggling Veterans seek help before they reach a crisis point by connecting them to resources for their unique needs. Our Veterans don't have to solve these challenges alone!

The VA has made it easier for Veterans to navigate the full range of resources available through our "Don't Wait. Reach Out." found at [VA.gov/REACH](https://www.va.gov/REACH). We are encouraging Veterans to reach out for help if they are struggling with life's challenges—from employment needs to housing.

And under the COMPACT Act, Veterans can get free, emergency suicide care when they need it, no matter where they are – including inpatient or crisis residential care for up to 30 days and outpatient care for up to 90 days. Veterans do not need to be enrolled in the VA system to use this benefit.

Veterans who are struggling, are in crisis or concerned about someone who may need help are encouraged to contact the Veterans Crisis Line to receive 24/7 confidential support. Veterans don't have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to connect. And any former servicemember in mental health crisis can receive emergency treatment and stabilization through the VA even if they hold an other than honorable discharge. No one will ever be turned away. To reach responders, **dial 988 then Press 1**, chat online at www.veteranscrisisline.net or text **838255**.

We are here to help!



Thomas Bundt, PhD., FACHE
VA Puget Sound Health Care System Executive Director



Veterans Crisis Line: 988 (press 1) or 1-800-273-8255 (press 1)

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Important Phone Numbers

Main phone:

- All care sites: 800-329-8387 (press 0 for operator)
- Seattle (S): 206-762-1010
- American Lake (AL): 253-582-8440

Appointments—Primary/Specialty Care

Make, change or cancel:

- All care sites: 800-329-8387
- S: ext. 62306
- AL: ext. 71234

Then press 1 for primary care or press 2 for specialty care

Chaplains: 206-764-2023

After-hours 800-329-8387 (press 0 for operator, and ask to leave message for on call chaplain)

Community Care

800-329-8387 ext. 64545 (multiple choices based on your care needs)

Community Outpatient Clinics

Edmonds 206-716-5858; Everett 800-329-8387; Mount Vernon 360-848-8500; Port Angeles 360-565-7420; Olympia 253-583-2621; Puyallup 253-583-3821; and Silverdale, 360-307-6920

Community Resource & Referral Center

Homeless primary care, social work, housing, laundry, showers:
206-764-5149

Dental

206-764-2324 (S), 253-589-4005 (AL)

Enrollment and Eligibility Office

206-277-1469

Eye Clinic

206-764-2020 (S), 253-583-1232 (AL)

Mental Health Addiction Treatment

206-764-2457 (S)

253-583-1759 (AL)

Mental Health Outpatient: 800-329-8387

ext. 62007 (S) or ext. 71759 (AL)

Nurse Advice Line 24/7

- 800-329-8387 (press 3)
- After-hours: 206-762-1010 (press 3)
- Billing: 800-329-8387, ext. 64545 (press 1)

Patient Advocates

206-764-2160 (S), 253-583-2585 (AL)

PUGPatientAdvocateGroup@va.gov

Pharmacy: 800-329-8387 (press 1)

206-277-4000 (S), 253-583-3000 (AL)

Prosthetics

206-764-2064 (S), 253-589-4014 (AL)

Police

206-764-2899 (S), 253-589-4019 (AL)

Social Work: 206-277-6866

Travel Office Call Center: 206-764-2120

Veterans Benefits Administration

Seattle Office: 800-827-1000

Women's Health Program:

206-764-2441



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
VA Puget Sound Health Care System

Official news from:

VA Puget Sound Health Care System
Office of Public Affairs, MS S-00-PA
1660 S. Columbian Way
Seattle, WA 98108
206-277-1711

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Central Appointments: 800-329-8387

American Lake
9600 Veterans Dr.
Lakewood, WA 98493



Main Campuses



Seattle
1660 S. Columbian Way
Seattle, WA 98108



Edmonds
21616 76th Ave. West,
Suites 107 and 112

Outpatient Clinics

Port Angeles/North Olympic
1114 Georgiana St.
Port Angeles, WA 98362



Everett
220 Olympic Boulevard
Everett, WA 98203



Olympia
Memorial Medical Plaza
500 Lilly Rd. NE, Suite 201,
Olympia, WA 98506

Puyallup
Sunrise Medical Center
11216 Sunrise Blvd. East
Bldg. 3, Suite 209
Puyallup, WA 98374



Mount Vernon
307 S. 13th St.
Suite 200
Mount Vernon, WA 98274

Silverdale
9177 Ridgetop Blvd. NW
Silverdale, WA 98383



Community Resource & Referral Centers

Community Resource
& Referral Center
305 S. Lucile St.
Seattle, WA 98108
206-764-5149



Community Resource
& Referral Center
419 South 2nd Street
Suite 2
Renton, WA 98057
425-203-7201

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Story ideas?

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- FOLLOW** <https://twitter.com/vapugetsound>